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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000833

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR FRONT OFFICE, EUR/NCE AND EUR/RPM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2016

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: POLAND CONFIRMS MND-CS CONTINGENT WILL STAY  
AT 900 THROUGH JANUARY 2007

REF: A. STATE 68273

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 1290

[1](#)C. WARSAW 761

[1](#)D. POLISH GEN STAFF LETTER TO CJCS 3/30/2006

Classified By: DCM Kenneth M Hillas, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) SUMMARY. MFA officials have confirmed DefMin Sikorski's public statement April 27 that Poland will maintain its current troop level of 900 in Iraq through the 7th rotation ending in January 2007. In parallel to Sikorski's political message, the Chief of the new Polish Operational Command told the MND-CS Force Generation Conference in Iraq that there would be no change in the Polish contingent through the end of 2006. In response to Ref A demarche, the MFA expressed continued interest in standing up a Polish-led PRT in al Qadisiyah. END SUMMARY.

MND-CS: Polish DefMin Ends Drawdown Speculation  
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[1](#)2. (C) Following U.S.-Polish bilateral discussions in a number of channels regarding a possible drawdown of Polish troops in Iraq as early as July 2006 (Refs C & D), Polish Defense Minister Radoslaw Sikorski stated publicly on April 27 that there would be no changes in 2006 to the Polish contingent in the Multinational Division Center South (MND-CS). He announced that the Polish contingent for the 7th rotation beginning in July 2006 would consist of elements of the 16th Pomeranian Mechanized Brigade under the command of MGen Ryszard Sorokosz. (N.B. The 16th Pomeranian was also deployed to MND-CS for the 3rd rotation that ended in January 2005.)

[1](#)3. (C) Embassy had previously learned on April 26 via the Polish General Staff that LtGen Henryk Tacik, Chief of Poland's Operational Command, had delivered a similar message at the MND-CS Force Generation Conference in Iraq. Sikorski's announcement provided confirmation at the political level.

[1](#)4. (C) The Polish MFA independently confirmed this when PolMil Chief delivered Ref A demarche on Polish contributions in Iraq to Americas Department Deputy Director Piotr Jaroszynski and separately to Witold Karp of the MFA Iraq Task Force. While acknowledging that President Kaczynski had already made the decision in principle on continuation of the existing Polish troop levels through January 2007, however, Jaroszynski also stressed that it was becoming more and more difficult to ignore domestic political opposition to Poland's deployment in Iraq. He foresaw a much more difficult internal government debate over continuing the deployment into 2007, even at reduced levels. Karp also noted separately that "President Kaczynski's decree guarantees our presence in Iraq through the end of this year," but he could not predict whether Poland would continue with MND-CS in 2007.

PRT's: Yes in Principle but Concerned about Practicalities  
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[1](#)5. (C) In response to Ref A points on Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Karp said that the MFA was still very interested in the idea of establishing and possibly leading a PRT in al Qadisiyah. However, the GOP is still mulling over the practicalities involved. They are not certain how they would staff the PRT, whether through MFA or MOD secondment, TDY assignments, or by hiring outside contractors. In addition, whatever the staffing source, there would be additional financial obligations involved and MFA and/or MOD would have to justify these to GOP budgetary authorities. (N.B. Poland does not at present have a mechanism for supplemental budgets, so any outlay for PRTs would have to be diverted from other programs.)

[1](#)6. (C) Regarding the proper channels for further PRT discussions, Karp acknowledged that Baghdad was probably the best venue for clarifying the technical details of establishing a PRT in al Qadisiyah. However, he stressed that the GOP would continue to approach the USG in capitals on policy issues, as well as on questions of U.S. financial support for Polish PRT personnel, as appropriate.

COMMENT

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17. As indicated in Ref C, the Polish MFA and President Kaczynski remain very well disposed to the U.S. and favor continued engagement in Iraq, as long as it is justified by "conditions on the ground." However, the GOP is also clearly feeling the pressure of domestic public opinion, all the more important to the governing Law and Justice party given the continuing uncertainty of interparty politics in Poland. DefMin Sikorski's motives in making a drawdown proposal, however, remain unclear and will need to be explored further between now and January 2007. Given what we have heard from various sources following delivery of the letter from Polish CHOD Gagar to CJCS Pace (Ref D), it seems that Sikorski may have precipitated the crisis over the Polish contingent by acting independently. If so, it is clear that President Kaczynski compelled Sikorski's April 27 public announcement to remove any doubt about Kaczynski's February promise to President Bush that Polish forces would remain in Iraq. END COMMENT.  
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